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Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its first regular session of 1999

(19–22 and 25 January 1999)*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its first regular session (19–22 and 25 January 1999). The report of the annual session (7–11 June 1999) will be issued as part II. These reports will be combined with the report on the second regular session (7–10 September 1999) and issued in final form as *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 14* (E/1999/34/Rev.1–E/ICEF/1999/7/Rev.1).

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I. Organization of the session

A. Election of officers for 1999

1. The officers of the Executive Board for the year 1999 were elected as follows:

President: H.E. Prof. Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria)

Vice-Presidents: H.E. Ms. Akmaral Kh. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan)
Mr. Fikret Mamedali Pashayev (Azerbaijan)
H.E. Dr. John William Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Mr. Carl Christian Hasselbalch (Denmark)

B. Election of Executive Board representatives to the joint committees for the biennium 1999–2000

2. The President recalled that the Executive Board would elect five UNICEF representatives to the World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH) and five to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (JCE). The members would be elected in their personal capacity, representing the five regional groups. There were also five alternates, elected from the same country as the representatives. Members and their alternates should be senior persons with relevant professional and UNICEF Board expertise, able to provide technical guidance and policy advise to the concerned organizations. The President of the Executive Board would serve as an ex officio member of the UNESCO/UNICEF JCE. (See the annex, decision 1999/1, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

C. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director

3. The President thanked outgoing Board members for their cooperation during the past year. He said that during the course of his association with UNICEF during 1998, he had gained enormous respect for the organization as well as for the Executive Director, noting that UNICEF was one of the most committed and effective organizations in the United Nations system. Commenting on the Board's ability to take decisions by consensus, he reminded delegations of the importance of maintaining this spirit of cooperation.

4. In welcoming delegations to the first regular session of the last year of the twentieth century, the Executive Director also expressed her deep appreciation to the outgoing President, and congratulated his successor on his election. She spoke about the importance of this juncture in the history of UNICEF. It would be the tenth anniversary year of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; a year in which the world would try to reach the year 2000 goals for child survival, development, protection and participation; and a year in which the pace of planning would be stepped up to energize a global movement for child rights in conjunction with the General Assembly's special session in 2001. She addressed the issue of humanitarian emergencies and the challenges they posed. Despite the enormous strain placed on the organization by the rapid proliferation of humanitarian emergencies, UNICEF, she emphasized, would continue efforts to do battle on all other fronts to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. (See E/ICEF/1999/CRP.2 for the full text of her statement.)

D. Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1999/2, was adopted. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session:

(a) Election of the officers of the Executive Board for 1999

(b) Election of Executive Board representatives to the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA CCH and to the UNESCO/UNICEF JCE

(c) Statements by the President and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Report of the Executive Director (Part I): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

Item 4: Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF

Item 5: Private Sector Division (PSD) work plan and proposed budget for 1999

Item 6: Country notes

Item 7: Summary of mid-term reviews (MTRs) and major evaluations of country programmes

Item 8: Progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 1998–1999

Item 9: Financial matters:*

(a) UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1997 and report of the Board of Auditors

(b) Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Item 10: 1999 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

Item 11: Other matters

Item 12: Closing remarks by the Executive Director and the President

Item 13: Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA

6. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 78 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session. In addition, 3 intergovernmental organizations and 17 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had submitted credentials.

7. A delegation said that there were many important items on the agenda for the session, especially the resource mobilization strategy. The Executive Board could not abdicate responsibility for mobilizing resources for UNICEF from Governments to the private sector, and she urged all members to support innovative fund-raising measures. Given the importance of this and other issues, delegations should conduct the session's business in a transparent, efficient and mature manner.

* Deferred from the second regular Board session in September 1998.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Report of the Executive Director (Part I): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

8. The Executive Director and the Director, Office of United Nations Affairs and External Relations, introduced the report (E/ICEF/1999/4 (Part I)). The Executive Director highlighted the good progress made over the last year on United Nations reform, while noting that more needed to be done. Progress had been made in the areas of common premises and services, harmonization and the selection of resident coordinators. The Director stated that in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/27 of 28 July 1998, the United Nations funds and programmes, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), would prepare for the Council a concise, consolidated list of issues that were central to improved coordination of operational activities, particularly with regard to the triennial policy review. The current report used a common format with that of UNDP, UNFPA and the World Food Programme (WFP) to facilitate inter-agency comparisons.

9. A number of delegations expressed their appreciation for the comprehensive report and oral updates, noting improvements over previous years in terms of analysis and focus. However, more work in that direction was needed, including a thorough analysis of lessons learned, a selected focus on key issues and problem-oriented reporting. Two delegations saw the need to draw a closer link between this report and the medium-term plan (MTP).

10. Some speakers stressed that the most important elements of United Nations reform should be to increase efficiency, improve cohesion and strengthen the impact of United Nations operations at the country level. Addressing the concern about the costs involved implementing the reform measures, the secretariat stated that headquarters costs were down and were not expected to increase.

11. On the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the main concerns expressed by delegations included retaining government ownership and participation; that it be country-driven; the need to go to scale; participation of the entire United Nations system and Bretton Woods institutions; the revision of some current planning mechanisms; quantifiable benefits; and the possible ongoing costs in terms of money and staff time. One delegation hoped to see a Pacific island country included among the pilot countries in the next phase of the UNDAF process. Some delegations reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the full integration of women into the UNDAF process. Concerning cooperation with the World Bank, the secretariat informed the Board of ongoing cooperative activities in the area of girls' education.

12. A number of speakers stressed the need to avoid compromising programmes through greater interdependency among United Nations agencies, and maintaining the role of UNICEF in micro-credit programmes to social support.

13. The secretariat noted the comments concerning the achievement of the year 2000 goals and informed the Board that at the annual Board session in June, the secretariat would be presenting a number of reports specific to the goals. In addition, part II of the Executive Director's report would examine achievements measured against the MTP.

14. Regarding the number of United Nations Houses, the secretariat said that there was a total of 30 such Houses designated by the Secretary-General.

15. With regard to the World Summit for Social Development, a number of speakers mentioned the role that UNICEF could play in the eradication of poverty and social integration. (See the annex, decision 1999/6, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

B. Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF

16. The report on "The UNICEF resource mobilization strategy" (E/ICEF/1999/5) was introduced by the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director. The Executive Director underscored the rationale and underlying principles of the strategy; the need to continue with efforts to increase the effectiveness in the use of funds, including improved contribution management; and the interrelationship between the resource mobilization strategy, the MTP and the Executive Director's annual report to the Board. In explaining the link between those key documents, the Executive Director emphasized the importance of distinguishing between the funding target of the MTP, which was intended to be a financial challenge, and the more conservative financial plan, which was based on a careful analysis of projected income and used for country programme and support budget allocations. The distinctions and linkages between the MTP funding target, the financial plan, financial planning and budgeting, and reporting on results and outcomes were subsequently further expanded upon by the Deputy Executive Director through a power point presentation.

17. Almost all delegations addressing this agenda item commented favourably on the quality of the document which had clearly tried to address the concerns, suggestions and comments made by Board members and observers during the various discussions held on this subject in the course of the preceding year. Several speakers reiterated their support for the underlying principles of the proposed resource mobilization strategy, in particular the need for increased and greater predictability of core resources; the importance of burden sharing among donors, while recognizing the voluntary nature of government contributions; and the intergovernmental nature of UNICEF and its Board. One delegation cautioned that the call for increased burden sharing should not undermine the voluntary nature of contributions. Some delegations, in the course of their interventions, also cautioned that the secretariat would need to consider the implications of a continued increase in the ratio of private sector funding, in particular its impact on the intergovernmental nature of the organization.

18. While a number of delegations considered the funding target of a 7 per cent annual growth rate in income as overly ambitious, others expressed support for this target, noting the importance of reporting on results and the need for improved results-based budgeting and reporting. One delegation indicated that a system of logging and tracking progress (i.e. log frames) could help to improve results-based reporting. Another delegation proposed that the annual report of the Executive Director be reformatted to facilitate this purpose. (See the annex, decision 1999/7, for the text of a decision concerning part II of the Executive Director's annual report that was adopted by the Executive Board under this agenda item.) Several speakers expressed appreciation to the secretariat for attempting to clarify and draw the link between the MTP, budgeting and results-based reporting. A number of delegations mentioned the ongoing discussions on this subject at the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board and encouraged an exchange of information on the subject among the agencies.

19. Several delegations expressed support for the recommendation that Governments pledge their contributions early in the year and, to the extent possible, provide an indicative pledge for future years. Two delegations indicated that their Governments would not be able

to comply with the time-frame proposed by the secretariat for pledging in January, but that they would continue to announce their pledges as early as possible in the year. One speaker, supported by several others, suggested that the first regular Board session be held in February to facilitate the announcement by Board members of their pledges during the session.

20. Positive support for supplementary fund-raising using a thematic, multi-country approach was noted by several delegations. A donor delegation suggested that this approach should also include a multi-agency approach. While welcoming this approach in principle, another speaker said that the mechanisms would need to be in place to ensure quality reporting with the necessary country details. On the subject of donor reporting, various delegations expressed positive interest in the proposal of providing an annual progress report on a given sector within a country, and noted that quality donor reports would be required. One delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and timeliness of the financial and progress reports.

21. The proposal put forward by the secretariat in the resource mobilization strategy for greater predictability and increased flexibility in the allocation of emergency funding was commented on positively by several delegations. However, other delegations said that they would prefer a strict earmarking of emergency funds. Still other speakers emphasized the importance of having the management systems in place to be able to report in a transparent manner on the flexible use of funds for emergencies. Another delegation requested clarification about flexible emergency funds and framework agreements.

22. In responding to the various delegations, the Executive Director stressed that the issue of the ratio between public and private sector funding was largely in the hands of Governments. She also said that the 7 per cent target was intended to be a challenge, but not an unrealistic one. She assured delegations that the secretariat agreed that the systems needed to be in place to ensure complete accountability, transparency and quality reporting. In response to a query about the concept of "tailor-made" strategies for each donor country, she clarified that this referred to internal strategies aimed at a more effective targeting of donor Governments, bearing in mind official development assistance (ODA) policies and priorities. (See the annex, decision 1999/8, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

23. Following the adoption of the decision, several delegations commented on its significance. A number of speakers found the process of achieving consensus to be constructive, transparent and even inspiring. One speaker said that the consensus text reflected the views and aspirations of all sides for UNICEF to pursue its work on behalf of the world's children. Another speaker said that the negotiation process had been a positive experience for both donors and programme countries because they had discussed real issues together, and his delegation was ready to build on this experience throughout the year.

C. Private Sector Division work plan and proposed budget for 1999

24. The Executive Board had before it the PSD work plan and proposed budget for 1999 (E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5). The report was introduced by the Director, PSD, who also presented the highlights of PSD's performance and activities during 1998, including structural reorganization, conversion to a calendar fiscal year and preparation of the new financial and logistical systems as well as income trends and PSD's objectives and strategies for 1999.

25. Some delegations expressed concern that PSD's forecasts for 1999 and beyond were too optimistic given the downward trend of 1997 and the 1998 latest estimates. One

delegation stated that even if the division were fully staffed, it would need time to begin operating at its fullest capacity. The Director responded that the 1997 benchmark year was only an interim eight-month period due to the change in the fiscal year, hence the anomaly of 12-month revenues and 8-month expenses for product sales, and the delayed reporting by partners of private sector fund-raising income. He further explained that the volume and revenue forecasts were prepared in consultation with the National Committees. The Director said that there was the potential for increased income from many markets, even those in which UNICEF was already successful. Such market potential could be tapped with the new PSD structure in place, thereby providing improved service capacity to partners; new marketing strategies, including rejuvenated product mix and brochures; a thrust to the corporate sector; and emphasis on brand management.

26. A number of speakers supported PSD's intention to focus on key markets and planned investments, especially for the Nordic countries and Central and Eastern Europe. One delegation said that although it realized that the need to clarify the relationship between National Committees and PSD was an important process, the ongoing PSD reorganization had hampered the joint planning process. Another speaker stressed the need for a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities between UNICEF and National Committees. The same speaker added that the relationship should be carried out professionally and that the National Committees should adhere to the 25 per cent retention rate. With regard to brand management, one delegation expressed its support, adding that it should not be confused with logo management. It should be remembered that UNICEF stood for children first.

27. In response to the concern expressed by one delegation that the phasing out of PSD activities in some countries would lead to the reduction in geographical awareness of the brand name, the Director said that in some countries PSD business would be handled by third parties to avoid operating costs. In others, where the market was too small to maintain a presence, customers would be able to obtain UNICEF products through a worldwide catalogue house. The Director said that PSD staff in both New York and Geneva were always available for direct, bilateral consultation with individual delegations on specific questions. (See the annex, decision 1999/2, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Country notes

28. The Director, Programme Division, provided an overview of the eight country notes being presented to the Executive Board, explaining how they reflected rights-based approaches to UNICEF programme cooperation and describing the four types of country situations represented therein. He added that two of the countries under review were currently participating in Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UNDAF.

29. Several speakers commended the Director for his substantive introduction. One delegation noted that the country notes lacked economic data, including on the level of international assistance and specific funding from United Nations agencies. While supporting the call for an overview of the aid situation in the countries in the main sectors in which UNICEF was cooperating, another delegation requested the secretariat to provide additional information on the extent to which bilateral donors were participating in and contributing to the country note process. The same speaker remarked that the programmes were moving in the right direction and that the priorities were clear, with an appropriate strategy mix. Both speakers said that the notes reflected the positive experiences with the UNDAF process and UNICEF collaboration with the World Bank and NGOs. The Director replied that providing data on aid flows would involve a change in the format of the country

note and that this would be reviewed. He also clarified that bilateral agencies participated regularly in the country note process, but that the quality of the involvement needed to be monitored.

Eastern and Southern Africa

30. The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa presented the country note for Zimbabwe (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.8), pointing out that HIV/AIDS and armed conflicts were the two major threats to the lives of children in the region. In response, UNICEF was reorienting its country programmes in the region to give the highest possible priority to the control of HIV/AIDS and to mainstream emergency preparedness and response into regular country programming.

31. Delegations addressing this agenda item expressed strong support for the country note and UNICEF work in *Zimbabwe*. Many speakers welcomed in particular the priority attention given to HIV/AIDS, human rights and community participation. Several speakers noted the importance of focusing on youth participation since young people were the most affected and the most likely to effect change. Thus, there was an urgent need to promote behaviour change through improved life skills training and local capacity-building. In that connection, UNICEF was called upon to strengthen collaboration with NGOs working in the region in the areas of counselling and treatment of AIDS victims. In pledging his country's support to the fight against AIDS, a speaker requested more information on some of the successful practices and experiences already achieved in the region. It was also suggested that UNICEF cooperate with the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community in its planned new initiatives to fight AIDS in the region. Some speakers expressed concern, however, that UNICEF efforts alone would not be sufficient to roll back the threat. What was needed, they continued, was a broad alliance against AIDS.

32. The representative of the United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) was impressed with the new direction of UNICEF efforts in this area. He mentioned the UNAIDS meeting held to formulate the broad directions of interventions in sub-Saharan Africa, and suggested that the coordination approach be reflected in the final country programme recommendation (CPR). With its innovative approach, UNICEF activities could serve as pilots for other interventions.

33. In response to the comments, the Regional Director noted the involvement of many partners, including the Government, United Nations agencies and UNAIDS. An important part of the strategy, he said, was the empowerment of young women. Zimbabwe was a good example of the appropriateness of a human rights approach.

West and Central Africa

34. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa began her presentation of the country notes for Cape Verde (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.9) and the Niger (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.10) with a brief overview of the situation in the region. She reported on the many serious challenges facing the region which called for special attention from the international community. UNICEF, she said, was responding with emergency interventions, post-conflict rehabilitation and the promotion of increased access to basic social services.

35. A delegation noted the good quality of the *Cape Verde* country note, stating that future UNICEF actions were clear, well-articulated and seemed grounded in a good analysis of past achievements and lessons learned. The same speaker suggested that the note should have explained why measles immunization coverage had declined since 1995. Another speaker requested clarification of the issue of socio-economic disparity which had been

identified as a major problem. He said that the poverty affecting the majority of the population, not disparity, was a major obstacle to social progress. He also questioned the appropriateness of the proposed strategy to shift more resources from supply operations to promoting quality, capacity-building and sustainability of services, suggesting that the strategy should be implemented with flexibility and in close coordination with other partners. The Regional Director agreed that perhaps the analysis of the situation in Cape Verde should have drawn a distinction between disparities in living conditions and the causes of poverty.

36. In commenting on the country note for the *Niger*, one speaker said that it clearly reflected the problems and needs of the country. He advised UNICEF to maintain close ties with other donors at the field level. Another speaker was encouraged by the decrease in the prevalence of dracunculiasis resulting from the joint efforts of UNICEF and other partners, but said that it should continue to remain among UNICEF priorities in the country until its eradication. The speaker remarked about the vertical nature of many of the past programmes and projects, and suggested that alternative strategies be considered to improve effectiveness. He also suggested that UNICEF and other donors discuss how to address the issue of regional and subregional disparities in this area. Some reservations were expressed about the Vaccine Independence Initiative in view of the financial constraints facing the country. The same delegation stressed the importance of achieving better quality of primary health care through staff training at the local level, while noting that the primary education programme should be global in scope. He added that the ongoing national decentralization policy, as well as the plight of vulnerable groups such as street children, would have to be taken into account in the next country programme. On the issue of basic education, the Regional Director said that it took into account the Education for Life strategy, which included reproductive health and AIDS prevention and treatment. In addition, UNICEF was working with donors to develop new strategies for the education sector. Regarding female circumcision, she said that it was integrated in the education and health programmes in many of the countries in the region, with appreciable success, especially in Burkina Faso. However, no data were available on the Niger.

Americas and the Caribbean

37. There were no country notes from the Americas and Caribbean region submitted at the present session. However, the Acting Regional Director highlighted a number of events that had implications for UNICEF programming in the region into the next decade, in particular the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Mitch, which caused more than 10,000 deaths, the destruction of social and economic infrastructure, and the loss of livelihoods of millions of people, as well as other natural disasters; and the continued impact of the economic downturn of the second half of 1998, with its increased unemployment, austerity and reduced social spending. Therefore, UNICEF and the Governments of the region needed to address the issue of vulnerability, especially of the poor. He also said that the capacity for emergency preparedness and response, including for potential economic crises, needed to be strengthened. There were no comments from delegations on the presentation.

East Asia and the Pacific

38. There were no country notes from the East Asia and Pacific region submitted at the present session. However, the Regional Director reported on highlights and key events in the region, including the Fourth Ministerial Consultation for East Asia and the Pacific Region, held in November last year, which had offered opportunities for countries to still achieve the World Summit for Children goals by 2000. He noted the progress in various areas as well as the disparities that remained between and within countries. There had been

some retrogression in the region, and the spread of HIV/AIDS had a profound negative impact on the lives of millions.

39. One delegation called the presentation informative and encouraging. She also concurred with the remarks that the Bangkok Declaration and Action Agenda reaffirmed the highest political commitment of Governments for achieving the goals of child survival, development, protection and participation and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the end of the discussion, the Regional Director highly commended the results of the Bangkok Ministerial Consultation, and both he and the Executive Director recommended the report of the Consultation to the Board.

South Asia

40. There were no country notes from the South Asia submitted at the present session. The Regional Director highlighted the relevant key issues and noted the significant challenges posed by the enormous child population of 542 million. He reported on the region's commitment to its children through ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the further commitment expressed at the 1996 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) conference, and the foreseeable endorsement of a SAARC Convention later in 1999 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for prostitution. While noting some of the region's achievements, he said that children were still faced with severe challenges and identified the priority actions to address them.

41. The Regional Director was commended for his informative report. One delegation expressed his Government's appreciation for UNICEF assistance in response to the flood emergency in his country. He felt that while improving primary basic education was a good initiative, it required a more structured programme. Another delegation reiterated the importance given in the SAARC Declaration to issues such as primary education for girls, malnutrition of young children, gender mainstreaming and iodine deficiency disorders. She particularly mentioned the efforts of establishing a national nutrition surveillance system in her country. The Regional Director expressed appreciation for the comments on primary education and the girl child.

Middle East and North Africa

42. The country note for the Islamic Republic of Iran (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.11) was presented by the Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. He said that the country programme strategy built on the country's successes and sought to address the unresolved issues influencing the well-being of the Iranian child. Strong political commitment had resulted in the achievement of all the year 2000 goals, with the exception of reducing malnutrition by one half. Issues once considered too sensitive were openly debated, and the next country programme had been designed through innovative participatory mechanisms and a process of transparency.

43. One speaker informed delegations that its embassy in Tehran had communicated positive comments on its participation in the country note development process for the *Islamic Republic of Iran* and commended UNICEF for its role. He further assured Board members that the priorities as described in the country note were also those of the Government and of development partners in the country. Another speaker commended the excellent collaboration in the country note development process. He added that his Government was dedicated to the eradication of disparities and looked forward to expanded collaboration with UNICEF to address the remaining challenges. The Regional Director thanked the delegations for their very supportive and encouraging remarks.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

44. The Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States introduced the country notes for Azerbaijan, Armenia, Romania, and the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.12–E/ICEF/1999/P/L.15, respectively). He spoke about the contracted social safety nets, resulting in immense pressure on family coping capacities. He also noted that there was inadequate support for basic social services for children and women owing to the fall in government revenues. As a result, attention would be focused on the problems of children in institutions, children with disabilities and children in conflict with the law. UNICEF would also give special attention to emerging challenges such as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS and drug abuse.

45. The country notes generally were judged to be of high quality. A speaker addressed the need for interaction with Governments and other partners and the importance of building on positive achievements of the past, while at the same time reforming institutes working for the protection of children and women. Another delegation remarked that there was little reference in the country notes to the emerging problem of child labour. The speaker added that UNICEF had an opportunity to use advocacy and integrated approaches at an early stage to prevent the problem from increasing, and wanted to know whether UNICEF had concrete plans to meet this challenge. In response, the Regional Director said that UNICEF should examine the issue of child labour in a larger context in order to identify possible solutions.

46. UNICEF was commended on the programme outlined for *Armenia*, which targeted areas of greatest need and noted the need to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated. The delegation added that indicators of programme should be developed to help focus activities. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the valuable cooperation and assistance of UNICEF to vulnerable groups. The representative of UNAIDS said that increases in the incidence of STDs, drug use and HIV infections had been observed in the country.

47. Numerous delegations commented on the *Azerbaijan* country note. A delegation reported that the serious deterioration of the situation of women and children had substantially limited the potential of the national Government to address the new challenges, especially those in the areas of health and education. In that connection, the UNAIDS representative added that, as in Armenia, increases in STDs, drug use and HIV infections had also been observed in Azerbaijan. The need for UNICEF support in the development of a national policy for safe motherhood and improved obstetric care was also stressed. Moreover, the country still continued to face the problem of 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons, including children in need of special protection living in settlements. Along with the support of the international community, the Government had achieved some results in the economic reform process, adopting a law on the rights of the child.

48. While acknowledging the good cooperation in education for health workers, the lack of resources in the education system was noted by a delegation. The same delegation felt that the decrease in school attendance could lead to a new challenge of child labour. Another speaker supported the introduction of new activities such as active learning methods, curriculum development, the expanded psychosocial rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict, etc. One delegation stressed the need to continue service delivery and capacity-building activities, while another speaker urged UNICEF to support subnational capacities to promote networking. A delegation stressed the importance of involving all interested partners, including NGOs, local authorities, United Nations agencies, the

Government and individuals, to achieve concrete results for the benefit of children and women. One speaker commented on the need for impact indicators.

49. A number of delegations fully supported the approaches and strategies proposed in the *Romania* country note. One of the speakers requested a more detailed review of the programme at the next stage and expressed a particular interest in how the UNICEF programme was coordinated with the work of other donors; obtaining more details on programmes for children and women and on the immunization programme, including the Government's own programme to include hepatitis B as one of the antigens in its national efforts; the "models of excellence" approach to child welfare; and understanding the programme objectives and impact indicators.

50. Several delegations welcomed the further reassurance that the rights-based approach to programming was reflected in the activities in the country note, especially in promoting access to health education and recreational services for marginalized and vulnerable children in particular. Therefore, greater emphasis needed to be placed on capacity-building and the participation of children. The UNAIDS representative suggested that UNICEF might also consider HIV/AIDS within the context of children with special needs, and drew attention to the issue of children with AIDS contained in the Romania CCA.

51. One delegation mentioned the importance of strengthening the linkages between the UNICEF country programme process and other important programme tools such as UNDAF, which would contribute to the harmonization of United Nations assistance at the country level and enable UNICEF to promote the centrality of children's rights among the United Nations priorities for assistance. UNICEF had played a key role in building partnerships among national actors and had helped to shape social reforms of the Government. However, as one speaker noted, it was not clear from the country note that the UNICEF strategy reflected the concern about decentralization, i.e. that it would not add to existing levels of social exclusion for children or their marginalization from the policy-making process. It was suggested that paragraph 15 of the country note should have taken into account the needs of pregnant women, particularly in rural areas which lacked doctors and where cultural norms mitigated against birth spacing.

52. One speaker expressed general support for the proposed programme for the *Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan*. Given the limited resources, UNICEF was urged to focus more narrowly on areas in which it had a comparative advantage, such as immunization, anaemia prevention and breastfeeding promotion. The same speaker also noted the need to increase coordination between UNICEF and donors. Several delegations commented that the section on the situation of children and women should have included a reference to the rising incidence of tuberculosis and its impact. A speaker also suggested that the same section would have benefited from a note explaining the effect of increased poverty on reducing the access of poor people, especially children and women, to health services.

53. Despite the negative impact of the transition on the provision of basic services to children in the areas of health and education in *Kazakhstan*, one speaker reported that progress had been made in some areas such as the elimination of polio and anaemia prevention. The speaker also addressed some of the emerging new problems such as increases in hepatitis, tuberculosis, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS. The UNAIDS representative was encouraged that UNICEF was integrating HIV/AIDS issues and the dangers of drug abuse into the school health education package in Kazakhstan. Appreciation was expressed for UNICEF cooperation in helping to rehabilitate the population affected by the consequences of the nuclear testing in Semipalatinsk.

54. A speaker was pleased to note that the proposed programme for *Kyrgyzstan* was used as a model for countries in the transition stage. UNICEF was urged to cooperate closely with UNESCO in preparation for the international decade for culture and non-violence and peace. The same speaker also expressed an interest in expanding initiatives for vaccine self-sufficiency.

55. Concerns were raised by one delegation about the Chernobyl accident and the recent Transcarpathian floods. He expressed appreciation to UNICEF for its assistance to handicapped children and its support to programmes for children with special needs. He also raised the issue of UNICEF support in 1999 for a programme for the desalinization of the drinking water supply as a result of the Chernobyl accident. The Executive Board was requested to consider the possibility of increasing general resources funding for vaccination programmes for the victims of the accident. Acknowledging that the environmental catastrophe at Chernobyl would continue to affect several countries in the region, the Regional Director said that UNICEF would continue to work with the affected communities to help them strengthen their coping capacities.

56. Since many of the interventions on the specific country notes dealt with similar issues and concerns, the Regional Director's responses could also apply to most of the countries. He acknowledged the need for both UNICEF and the countries of the region to focus on the newly emerging issues facing young people and adolescents, from STDs to tobacco and drug addiction and HIV/AIDS. He advised that the CPRs would clearly reflect the rights-based approach, the issues of hepatitis B and tuberculosis, and collaboration and coordination with bilateral and other international organizations. He concurred with several of the speakers that it was necessary to ensure that the good work done on the immunization programmes was not lost. He stressed the importance of working in a decentralized way in the region in order to help countries and NGOs focus on the most vulnerable groups. In response to comments made by the representative of UNAIDS, the Regional Director agreed that UNICEF and UNAIDS were strong partners in the region and acknowledged the importance of dealing with AIDS before it reached a pandemic level, helping young people to have a better understanding of HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves. They also needed to have access to services that were friendly and open.

Europe

57. The Regional Director for Europe said that in 1999, the Office for Europe would have two complementary objectives: to continue to mobilize the international community to ensure that children's rights were protected and promoted all over the world, with the support of the National Committees for UNICEF; and to work with national and regional organizations "governmental and non-governmental" to identify and highlight children's issues that needed increased attention within the European community. Child rights issues were receiving increased attention in Europe, and the Regional Director reported on several initiatives.

58. He said that UNICEF was counting on the National Committees to meet their objectives in the region. However, the situation had become more difficult for the Committees over the last few years; competition was tougher and, in many countries, a large percentage of the population had less money to give. At the same time, with the downward trend in ODA, UNICEF looked to private contributions to help fill the gap. In the face of those challenges, the Regional Office and PSD were working with the National Committees to develop a new planning process aimed at helping the latter to maximize their potential. A set of key performance indicators had been developed with seven pilot Committees, which would be used to measure the effectiveness of each Committee's fund-raising and sales

activities, as well as to monitor their overall financial health, their managerial strength, their leadership and visibility, and their capacity to innovate. Those indicators would be used as tools for a joint, in-depth review of past performance and the development of a three-year plan for each Committee. Simultaneously, key performance indicators were being developed to measure how well UNICEF provided the required inputs from its side.

E. Summary of mid-term reviews and major evaluations of country programmes

59. The Director, Programme Division, provided an overview of the 23 MTRs being presented to the Executive Board, highlighting the MTR process, programme priorities, achievements, concerns and the challenges ahead. He said that the reports showed a close collaboration among UNICEF, Government and other partners; that the review preparations and meetings were government led; and that the Executive Board comments on previous MTRs and organizational guidelines had strengthened the process. Three major concerns were raised by the Director in his presentation: HIV/AIDS; malnutrition; and poverty. He also identified the incorporation of the 1998–2000 programme priorities, rights-based programming approaches and United Nations reforms into existing and future programmes as among the main challenges facing the 23 countries. There were no comments from delegations on the Director's presentation.

60. In her introduction to the major evaluations conducted in 1998, the Director of the Evaluation, Policy and Planning Division highlighted two major dimensions: (a) the clear emphasis on strengthening UNICEF evaluation capacity; and (b) the increasing visibility of and focus on children's and women's rights. She also reviewed the main areas of achievement with regard to evaluation capacity. She further noted that the reports echoed the human rights approach of UNICEF. Children in war, with reference to the role of teachers and child caregivers in providing psychosocial support to traumatized children, and the contribution of evaluation work in the fulfilment of a child's right to education were two major themes highlighted in the report. There was no comments from delegations on the Director's presentation.

Eastern and Southern Africa

61. The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa introduced the report (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.1). He highlighted the general conclusions and lessons learned from the 1998 MTRs which took place in Eritrea, Madagascar, Mauritius, Swaziland and Uganda, and gave an overview of the situation in the region. He also reported that major evaluations undertaken in 1998 and said that more work was planned to adopt international programme evaluation standards, strengthen institutional capacities and the focus on children's rights, train UNICEF staff and promote networking among professionals.

62. One speaker commended on the quality of the MTRs and evaluations, noting that they provided delegations with a way of following up on the results of decisions made by the Board three to five years ago, including the results of the multi-donor evaluation. The secretariat replied that one could learn more from successes than from failures, which was the reason UNICEF focused on lessons learned. Several speakers intervened to emphasize that evaluations also needed to focus on what did not work in order to improve programmes.

63. Regarding the *Eritrea* MTR, one speaker drew attention to paragraph 10 of the report which stated that two thirds of available resources were channelled towards service delivery, with the balance planned for capacity-building and empowerment. The report said all three

were strategies and should not be singled out and measured separately. The secretariat acknowledged that the distinction in the report was not a useful one, noting also that empowerment was not a strategy, but that strategies could be more or less empowering.

64. Several delegations endorsed the recommendation to strengthen the basic education and HIV/AIDS components of the programme for *Swaziland*. One speaker enquired about whether the political and economic situation had deteriorated to such an extent that it affected the provision of services.

65. Another delegation stated its support for the findings of the *Madagascar* MTR and expressed appreciation for the efforts to improve formal education through the use of programme contracts between teachers, parents and education authorities. The same delegation asked whether other countries in the region were trying this approach. The delegation also queried the total number of health centres actually being supported by UNICEF as part of the Bamako Initiative compared to the number assisted by other agencies. He urged UNICEF to be more balanced in the presentation of its contributions in the health sector and to acknowledge more openly support from others towards shared objectives. Citing the shortfall in funding for the period 1996–1997, the delegation called for more realistic programming. While confirming that UNICEF tried to be as realistic as possible, the Regional Director explained the reasons for the shortfall in funding, agreeing that they should have been stated more clearly.

66. Another speaker agreed with the findings of the *Mauritius* MTR and the proposed strategy for transition of the country programme. The same speaker, however, expressed concern about the high operational costs related to such a small country programme, drawing attention to the number of staff in relation to available resources. The Regional Director replied that the country programme focused on advocacy, not service delivery, and that it would eventually be phased out.

67. One delegation wished to know to what extent the lessons learned from the evaluation of the psychosocial programme had shed light on the comparative strengths of community-based and more traditional approaches. The numbers of affected children were so great that a community-based approach seemed to be the only feasible option. The Regional Director replied that it was important to recognize the large numbers of children who required trauma recovery assistance and that other regular techniques were inappropriate.

West and Central Africa

68. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa presented the report (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.2). She said that the MTRs for the three countries concerned, namely Burkina Faso, Chad and Ghana, revealed that there could be confusion between the specific objectives of the country programme of cooperation and the national development objectives of the host Government. Implementation had been hampered by the inability of Governments to meet their commitments in certain critical areas, and a lack of intersectoral coordination and geographical focus in the field. Moreover, resource mobilization efforts had fallen short of expected results. Those findings had been used to reorient the programmes in the three countries.

69. Several delegations commented positively on the quality of the report, noting its open and frank tone and that it was more critical than the report from the Eastern and Southern Africa region. One speaker cautioned that UNICEF activities in the region needed to be balanced between emergency interventions and long-term development activities. The same speaker called on UNICEF to concentrate on helping countries to achieve the World Summit for Children goals, while urging donor countries to re-commit to the goals. With regard to

evaluations, a delegation said that UNICEF should remain a learning organization through its evaluation activities.

70. Several delegations noted that the results of the MTRs often led to adjustments in the original programme objectives. Concern was expressed that the programming process currently being used might not be sufficiently realistic in view of the need for so many adjustments during the MTRs. The same delegations asked whether or not it was realistic to continue programming based on supplementary funds that were not in hand. One speaker expressed concern about the long-term impact of this situation on the credibility of the organization.

71. A speaker said that the *Burkina Faso* MTR had identified two major constraints that needed to be addressed thoroughly in the future: the slow process in liquidating cash advances; and the difficulty encountered in raising supplementary funds. The same delegation sought clarification on the issue of unliquidated cash advances to Governments which slowed programme implementation during 1996–1997, and raised the question of the realism of the current programming process since the MTR for Burkina Faso also proposed significant adjustment of objectives and strategies. In that connection, the delegation wondered whether the target groups and zones of intervention had been properly identified in the original programming exercise.

72. Regarding the *Chad* MTR, the same speaker was impressed with the many achievements of the UNICEF programme in view of the limited national institutional capacity. Another delegation suggested establishing working relationships with civil society in countries where national institutional capacities were limited, stating that it was encouraging to note that the MTR processes had led to necessary adjustments in UNICEF programmes to reflect the changing situation in the field.

73. The Regional Director thanked delegations for their constructive comments, stressing that despite constraints, remarkable progress had been with regard to ensuring the rights of children and women in all three countries.

Americas and the Caribbean

74. In his presentation of the report on the Americas and the Caribbean (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.3), the Acting Regional Director highlighted the important role that country programme activities played in influencing policies in the region and the interest that Governments showed in programme planning and review, including the major role they played in the MTR exercises. The four MTRs carried out in 1998 for Honduras, Mexico, Peru and Brazil noted satisfactory progress, but with shortfalls in maternal mortality and nutrition. The region's ongoing efforts at strengthening monitoring and evaluation were also highlighted.

75. Two delegations noted the very consultative process that had characterized the *Peru* and *Honduras* MTRs. With regard to Peru, a donor delegation commended UNICEF for the content of the MTR which covered progress made and challenges remaining, as well as the process and the work of UNICEF in the country in general. The same speaker also noted the excellent collaboration with UNICEF in Peru, urging that such partnerships with donors be promoted in other countries.

76. One delegation noted the progress reported in the *Mexico* MTR in meeting the World Summit for Children goals and applauded UNICEF for recognizing the need to define more precisely objectives for each of the goals and how they would be achieved. However, the delegation also expressed concern at the proposed shift in UNICEF support at this critical juncture from the provision of basic services and financial cooperation to technical

assistance for rights-based programming. Noting that the review would result in changes in staffing, the delegation urged that technical staffing be maintained in Mexico as well as in other countries as they made the final push towards the end of decade goals. In responding to those concerns, the Acting Regional Director noted that the countries in the region were very committed to fulfilling the World Summit goals, and UNICEF would continue to support their achievement within a rights-based approach. He reassured delegations that any staffing changes would be made very judiciously and would not impact negatively on the commitment to achieving the World Summit goals. As one of the initiators of the World Summit for Children, one delegation highlighted the importance of UNICEF work in supporting national efforts to meet the goals, and noted some of the significant activities carried out during 1998 to meet specific challenges.

77. One delegation enquired about the prospects for expanding the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean in the region. The Acting Regional Director explained that the results of the evaluation had been very encouraging and had shown that the projects had contributed to changes in social and public policies. He added that the initiatives had now been mainstreamed into regular programmes in other countries in the region.

East Asia and the Pacific

78. In presenting the report for East Asia and the Pacific (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.4), the Regional Director noted that the MTRs had included the five largest programmes in the region, i.e. Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. While the overall assessment of the utility of MTRs had been unquestionably positive, the Regional Director reported that the experience had raised some issues for the future, such as the sometimes high cost in terms of time and resources. Although the concept of the MTR was primarily to assess experience in the first half of the programme cycle, and to make appropriate adjustments as required, he said that increasingly, changes in the country environment were taking place at such a rapid pace that the MTRs were becoming the launching pad for new country programmes, even as the existing ones were being modified.

79. Referring to the remarks that the MTR process could become too elaborate and consume inordinate amounts of time and human resources, another speaker wondered how this could be improved. She also asked how the MTR could be used as a launching pad for the new programme when the situation was changing so rapidly and what were the lessons learned in this regard.

80. One delegation said that the economic crisis had threatened the social welfare and development of her country and expressed appreciation for the quick response of UNICEF, which was further reinforced in the MTR. She agreed that there was a need for renewed efforts in helping school drop-outs as education was vital to child development. It was equally important to help 12,000 street children, and she informed the Board of her Government's efforts in this area.

81. Appreciation was expressed for UNICEF support towards the achievement of the year 2000 goals in *China*. One speaker said that while the MTR had reaffirmed achievements made so far, it had also helped to identify the challenges and strategies to tackle them. Another delegation felt that the education programme could serve as a model for other countries in the region. He felt that the verticality of the government structure posed a constraint to programme implementation and wanted to know how this would be resolved. The Regional Director reported that good progress had been made and was confident that the difficulties of verticality would be overcome. He also reported progress in programmes

to combat girl trafficking and was satisfied with the collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security, a rare experience for UNICEF to work with a government institute of this nature.

82. One delegation commended the results of the *Indonesia* MTR and expressed satisfaction with the collaboration between the UNICEF country team and her embassy in Jakarta. She also called for increased donor coordination in post-crisis responses. Another speaker expressed support for UNICEF collaboration with the World Bank on basic education to enable the re-entry of drop-outs. The Regional Director explained the revised strategies, such as concentrating on fewer issues, providing direct services, increasing collaboration with NGOs, building social capital and collaborating with subnational levels. He reaffirmed UNICEF efforts, in close collaboration with all donors, and referred to cooperation with the World Bank, in which the Bank was focusing on re-entry, while UNICEF was focusing on advocacy and social mobilization.

83. A speaker referred to the success of border collaboration on National Immunization Days between *Myanmar* and China which promoted cost-effectiveness and enquired whether such collaboration could be expanded. The Regional Director provided additional information on the Mekong HIV/AIDS programme, which involved six countries, including Myanmar.

84. Concerning the *Viet Nam* MTR, one speaker supported the strategy in the water and sanitation sector to avoid spreading activities too thinly. He also reported on the useful collaboration between UNICEF and his embassy in the same area as well as in child protection. A delegation wondered if the demand-driven approach would actually run counter to the UNICEF policy to focus on the poor. The Regional Director replied that experience had shown that when people participated, it gave them a sense of ownership and desire for sustainability. This would not run counter to the UNICEF policy to support the poor.

South Asia

85. The Regional Director for South Asia described the major findings of the MTRs conducted in Afghanistan and Bangladesh, as well as the regional evaluations, as contained in document E/ICEF/1999/P/L.5. He also reported that UNICEF had been an active partner in the development of UNDAF for Afghanistan.

86. Delegations thanked the Regional Director for his excellent summary of the findings of the MTRs and evaluations. A speaker spoke of her country's efforts in providing humanitarian assistance to *Afghanistan* through both bilateral and multilateral channels. She emphasized the need for the next UNICEF programme to support girls who had been deprived of educational opportunities.

87. Concerning *Bangladesh*, one delegation wanted to learn more about progress in areas that were not reported on, such as the hard-to-reach programme. He also raised concerns about the inadequate flow of resources and mentioned in particular that the literacy programmes required further strengthening and support. He reiterated the need for all to collaborate in finding solutions to the problem of arsenic contamination in his country. With regard to aid flows, the Regional Director reported that Bangladesh was less dependent than other countries, and had experienced many successes. Concerning arsenic contamination, he reported that UNICEF was currently supporting a comprehensive package of measures to address the issue and related health problems in collaboration with national counterparts and international partners, including the World Bank, WHO, and Asian and global arsenic networks.

88. The fruitful collaboration between UNICEF and her agency in the areas of polio eradication and universal salt iodization in Bangladesh was commended by a speaker. She also welcomed the signing of a three-party memorandum of understanding on the elimination of child labour in the garment industry. She mentioned UNICEF/WHO/United States Agency for International Development (USAID) collaboration in the areas of health and nutrition as well as USAID support for the 1998 flood relief work. While expressing support for the MTR, one delegation mentioned a water/sanitation evaluation sponsored by the Danish International Development Agency that would be finalized shortly.

Middle East and North Africa

89. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa introduced the report (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.6). The MTRs, he said, had marked a very important juncture in programming in both Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic, and described the results. He informed members that in 1998, a total of 43 studies and 25 evaluations were conducted in the region.

90. UNICEF was commended for the quality of the report by several speakers. One speaker said that it was objective, comprehensive and very analytical, and that it reflected the shift to a child rights approach. She commended UNICEF for its commitment to gender and the eradication of disparities as well as for its ability to raise funds to counterbalance the reduction in general resources. The same speaker applauded the HIV/AIDS initiative in *Egypt* and urged the organization to take the lead in the region on innovative ways to break the silence on this issue. She further commended UNICEF and the regional Goodwill Ambassador for successful awareness promotion activities. Another delegation reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to full equality among all children. In addressing his Government's financial contributions to UNICEF programmes, he assured the Board that it should redouble its efforts, especially in the areas of health and education.

91. One delegation expressed concern that the report did not provide a picture of the deplorable situation faced by Iraqi children, and he requested UNICEF to undertake a study of the real situation of children and to share the results with members of the Board. In response, the Regional Director clarified that no MTR or major evaluations took place in Iraq in 1998 and that the Iraq country programme had been discussed at the September 1998 session of the Board.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

92. In presenting the report (E/ICEF/1999/P/L.7), the Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States said that the MTRs of the country programmes of Albania, Georgia and Turkey had led to the identification of new areas requiring attention, such as children living on the street, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. They reflected a focus on children's rights and, ultimately, new programme directions. The MTRs reaffirmed that greater emphasis should be placed on the role of primary care providers, families and communities in child development and protection, as institutional solutions in many places were no longer viable. They also identified a need for increased intersectorality and the convergence of services. The importance of a capacity-building strategy and of the use of models of excellence to formulate successful programme approaches was very clearly reflected in all three reviews. He said that UNICEF would continue efforts aimed at the extensive capacity-building of both government institutions and NGOs, establishing sound networking mechanisms and

applied research. There were no comments from delegations on the Regional Director's presentation.

F. Progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 1998–1999

93. The UNICEF Comptroller made a brief introductory statement on the "Report on progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 1998–1999" (E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.1), which was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1998/2 (E/ICEF/1998/6/Rev.1). In that decision, the Executive Director was requested to ensure that the current ratio of management and administration and programme support costs to programme resources would be contained. The Board also requested UNICEF to report on progress in implementing the budget, taking into account the MTP, levels of general resources, costs and income, and the effect of currency fluctuations and implications for human resources.

94. The Comptroller explained that the report was prepared on the basis of data available covering the first eight months of biennium. Nevertheless, as illustrated in the report and confirmed by early estimates for the first 12 months of the biennium, UNICEF was well on track with respect to income projections. It was possible that total income might exceed the MTP projections for 1998. On the expenditure side, UNICEF had experienced early savings in the support budget, but it was too early to generalize these savings for the entire biennium. Therefore, as indicated in the report, UNICEF did not expect any increase in the proportion of support costs to programme resources, and did not see any reason to recommend any changes to the biennium budget as approved by the Board.

95. One delegation expressed appreciation for the secretariat's efforts in preparing the support budget and welcomed the principle that cost increases must be absorbed within the approved budget. The same speaker endorsed the conclusions in section VI of the report. (See the annex, decision 1999/3, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

G. Financial matters

96. Under this agenda item, which was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, the Executive Board reviewed the following reports:

(a) "UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1997 and report of the Board of Auditors" (A/53/5/Add.2);

(b) "Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions" (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.9).

97. This agenda item had been deferred from the second regular session of 1998 to allow the Executive Board to receive the report of the Board of Auditors. The Board would also benefit from receiving the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (A/53/513), which the Deputy Executive Director brought to the Board's attention, as well as from the Fifth Committee's deliberations and resolutions on this subject. The issues detailed below were raised by two delegations.

98. The timing of the Board of Auditor reports and the report of the Advisory Committee coming to the Executive Board for discussion was a situation that they would not want to see repeated, if possible. Therefore, it was suggested that the secretariat work with the

Advisory Committee towards resolving the timing issue. The Deputy Executive Director replied that it was outside the secretariat's control as to when the Board of Auditor and Advisory Committee release their reports. However, UNICEF would do the utmost to ensure that the accounts were submitted on time, which they have been, although the workload of both the Board of Auditors and Advisory Committee were heavy and the timing of the Board session made the situation somewhat complicated.

99. It was suggested that the approval process be changed so that the Executive Board would approve the Board of Auditor's report with the copy provided to the General Assembly for information. The UNICEF Executive Board was accountable for approving the budget policy and strategic direction of UNICEF and, therefore, was best placed to approve the Board of Auditor's report. Although the process was the reverse for all other funds and programmes, the delegation was exploring the possibility of changing that process. The Deputy Executive Director said that it was her understanding that this issue might be brought before the General Assembly at its next session, so the delegation might wish to take this matter up at that time.

100. A delegation suggested that UNICEF internal control standards be strengthened and encouraged that these be patterned after the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institution for internal control standards. It was the delegation's belief that adopting these standards would be a progressive move for UNICEF and would help in the efforts of more organizations accepting these guidelines, or at least these audit principles.

101. The delegation further suggested that UNICEF strongly consider introducing the practice of results-based auditing which would focus on results that were to be obtained in addition to making observations on the adherence to existing procedures. Observations could be made as to which processes and procedures might well be re-examined, if they were no longer instrumental in the achievement of the results, but could be obstacles. Or, in some way, they could be revised to further improve the achievement of results. The Deputy Executive Director noted those two points pertaining to the audit which would be shared with the UNICEF Director of Internal Audit, who was likewise looking into these issues. On results-based auditing, the Deputy Executive Director referred to the experience cited by the Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa on the outcome of programme audits conducted in the region and which, in addition to the MTR, changed some of the programmes for the future.

102. The issue of accounting of expenditures, specifically with regard to cash assistance to Governments, which was charged directly to expenditures and, therefore, obscured the clarity of accounting, was raised. The speaker wanted to know what was being contemplated in this area. Another problem, which they also found in UNDP, was the issue of justifying advances paid to Governments. This was an ongoing concern of the auditors. On the first point, the Deputy Executive Director confirmed that a review was being undertaken to ensure that the provisions of the UNICEF Financial Regulations and Rules were consistent with the organization's accounting treatment of cash assistance to Governments. The outcome of the review would be shared with the Advisory Committee and presented to the Executive Board at its September session. The Deputy Executive Director further clarified that because UNDP and UNICEF operated differently, their operations were not quite comparable. UNDP was an executing agency, while UNICEF cooperated with partners based on agreed plans of actions between UNICEF and the Government. Cash assistance transferred to UNICEF partners to support programmes of cooperation passed ownership to them upon payment. For that reason, it was neither an advance nor a national execution in the way UNDP operated. However, the secretariat was ensuring that its policies and procedures were consistent with its practices.

103. On the subject of accounting of contributions-in-kind, a delegation felt that the present treatment had the effect of underestimating income. The Deputy Executive Director confirmed that contributions in-kind were being reviewed internally as to accounting treatment. However, it was difficult to put a value on some of the commodities donated to UNICEF.

104. One speaker requested clarification of the mention in the auditor's report of a deficit which stemmed from the sizeable deficit from the expected income for emergency relief and programmes from additional incomes. It was the understanding of the delegation that when a programme was funded from additional income, it could not begin until the totality of the income was effected. In that case, there could only be a deficit in operations funded in this manner if the costs were initially underestimated. The Deputy Executive Director explained that there appeared to be a deficit when a contribution was received at the end of a year and the bulk of the expenditures were incurred in the succeeding years. UNICEF recorded income the year it was received, and it was gradually expended in succeeding years. Therefore, in the years that the expenditures were incurred, there appeared to be a deficit in income. This situation could also be true if income was received very late in one biennium, and expenditures were incurred in the next biennium. UNICEF would then have the income in one biennium and the expenditures in the other. Another point referred to by the auditors was that UNICEF had not received as much funding as estimated for general resources, supplementary and emergency funding. There had been much less income in the biennium 1996–1997 when there were not as many emergency appeals made as in the previous bienniums.

105. There were also some questions on the bidding procedures for consultants: what was the current regulation with regard to bidding procedures for consultants; was there a threshold beyond which tendering was required; what was the procedure when the person responsible for the contract did not respect the rules of the organization; and should sanctions be imposed when the rules of the organization were not complied with. The Deputy Executive Director confirmed that steps had been taken to strengthen the guidelines. While there were no requirements for regular bidding, there should be a selection process on a number of candidates which should be documented. For institutions, UNICEF followed the normal bidding process. She said that UNICEF had strengthened its internal control for the employment of individual consultants. Reporting was required on a quarterly basis from every UNICEF office. If these new guidelines were not followed, the authority to issue contracts would be withdrawn. Compliance with the new guidelines would be part of the performance evaluation report for staff who had authority to issue contracts. (See the annex, decision 1999/4, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

106. With regard to the issue of the capital reserve fund that was highlighted by the external auditors, as referred to in paragraphs 15–17 of document E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.9, the Board agreed that in approving the establishment of a reserve fund for field office accommodation and staff housing (E/ICEF/1990/13, decision 1990/26), it had never asked to be involved in the approval of specific projects. As had been the case since 1990, the Executive Director would continue to report to the Board on the status of the fund in statement VIII of the biennial report.

H. 1999 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

107. The Executive Board had before it a recommendation by the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1999/6), which was introduced by the Director, Programme Division. He said that the Bureau had endorsed the Executive Director's recommendation that the 1999 Maurice

Pate Award be conferred upon the Tanzanian NGO *kulcana*, in recognition of its significant and innovative contribution to improving the situation of children in that country and to inspiring other NGOs in the region to bring a child rights perspective to their work. The Executive Board approved the recommendation without comment. (See the annex, decision 1999/5, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

I. Other matters

108. No other matters were raised for discussion.

J. Closing remarks by the Executive Director and the President

109. The Executive Director expressed appreciation to the Executive Board for the broad participation many delegations. The secretariat appreciated the breadth of comments made, especially on the country notes, MTRs and evaluations, which would be especially useful to field offices. The long hours devoted to the resource mobilization strategy demonstrated members' sincere interest in and concern and support for UNICEF. That decision would challenge UNICEF to do the best it could do. She pledged that the secretariat would work hard to meet and even exceed their expectations, although she did not underestimate the challenges ahead. The world was an increasingly complex and violent place, where people were willing to speak about children, but did very little. The resource mobilization strategy also posed special challenges to donors and she hoped that they, in turn, would meet the expectations of UNICEF.

110. The President thanked the secretariat and delegations for their hard work throughout the session. He also expressed appreciation to the members of the Bureau for their support and pledged to continue working with them and the Board throughout the year.

III. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund

A. Major areas of concerted action for 1999

Resource flows, follow-up to international conferences, the resident coordinator system

111. The Administrator, UNDP, stated that he hoped the joint meetings in future would function more as a joint review board for the activities of particular country teams, as it was important for their focus to be on country-level issues. The United Nations was consistently successful in the field of operational activities, including both humanitarian and development-related interventions. He applauded General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 on the triennial policy review, which he said reflected a profound sense of the reality of work at the country level. In particular, the resolution supported the work of the members of the UNDG at the country level. He was pleased with the guidance provided by the resolution on so many important aspects of operational activities.

112. With regard to the resident coordinator system, he noted that there had been much progress in the past year. As funder and manager of the resident coordinator system, UNDP had worked to strengthen the system and appreciated the support from UNDG partners. A successful competency assessment exercise of 40 resident coordinator candidates had taken

place for the first time. Following the competency assessment, the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel had shortlisted candidates for each open resident coordinator position. In real progress towards broadening the base of resident coordinators, 21 out of 130 were now from outside UNDP, as compared with 1993 when there had been only one. Currently, 21 per cent of resident coordinators were women, compared with 10 per cent in 1993.

113. A strengthened resident coordinator system was invaluable in the joint effort to promote coherent and cohesive country-level action by the United Nations as mandated by the Secretary-General, he said. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions had produced a second guidance note to the resident coordinator system with regard to the follow-up to global conferences. UNDAF was an ideal tool to ensure country-level follow-up to conferences.

114. The Administrator added that General Assembly resolution 53/192 devoted 10 paragraphs to funding, an issue that was of the highest priority. The steady decline in ODA must be halted. Since 1992, core contributions to UNDP and ODA both had declined by 20 per cent. He noted that the multi-year funding frameworks were under discussion in the Executive Boards.

Monitoring and evaluation, use of common indicators

115. The Executive Director, UNFPA, focused primarily on issues related to monitoring and evaluation, including indicators. She said that monitoring and evaluation were an important part of General Assembly resolution 53/192 on the triennial policy review. The funds and programmes agreed on the importance of reviewing and assessing what was being done in operational activities and documenting the results. They also all recognized the need to be more analytical about successes and weaknesses and to collect lessons learned and feed them back into future programming.

116. She said it was useful to recall a number of points. The funds and programmes were not starting from scratch; they all had long-standing expertise and experience in those areas. Moreover, there was coordination in monitoring and evaluation, especially at the field level, but it had not been well documented. The system-wide Inter-agency Working Group on Evaluation provided a useful forum to exchange technical information on substantive and methodological issues, and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions had harmonized monitoring and evaluation procedures in the United Nations system. The development of the CCA and UNDAF had helped to prepare the ground for significantly improved coordination and collaboration in that area. Also, the UNDG members had reviewed reporting forms to see how they could be simplified; discussed ways to harmonize training of national counterparts in capacity-building and results-based budgeting; and reviewed matters related to national execution and sector-wide approaches.

117. She said that the CCA and UNDAF provided a significant opportunity to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation components of programmes. The CCA established a baseline to measure progress, a database and a list of agreed common indicators. It also required that steps be taken to strengthen the country's capacity to collect, analyse and use data. If the CCAs accomplished even part of that ambitious agenda, they would provide, for the first time, a solid basis to undertake monitoring and evaluation that was planned and agreed by all concerned parties. An overriding concern was to strengthen the longer- term capacity of countries in that area. UNDAF guidelines contained an important component on monitoring and evaluation that called for a monitoring and evaluation plan and foresaw more joint exercises at regular intervals.

118. The Executive Director said it was of utmost importance that the United Nations system agreed on a common set of indicators for a given country. This was possible because of the work that had been done in a number of forums, including the Inter-agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for All (BSSA) and the United Nations Statistical Commission, and in the development of the CCA and UNDAF. The new CCA indicator frameworks took into account the key outcome indicators in previous lists, notably the 15 social sector indicators of the Minimum National Social Data Set and the 11 key development indicators of the BSSA Task Force. In developing the CCA indicator framework, the United Nations had been mindful of the need not to add to countries' reporting burdens, to ensure country ownership of the indicators and to strengthen local statistical capacity.

119. She concluded by noting a number of other issues relating to harmonization of policies and procedures that the UNDG members would address in the months ahead. For example, they would closely monitor progress in harmonizing programming cycles, for which it had provided guidance and instructions to country offices. UNDG members would also be taking a fresh look at the programming procedures of each organization in the context of the implementation of the CCA and UNDAF with a view to streamlining and simplifying them further.

Harmonization of programme cycles, common premises and services, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Common Country Assessment

120. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that harmonization of programme cycles was key to the introduction and effectiveness of UNDAF and that the heads of the funds and programmes had asked all offices to harmonize their programme cycles by 2003. To date, 39 countries were harmonized and another 49 would soon have agreements to do so. The funds and programmes were also looking at countries where their cycles were off by just one year. In Colombia and Paraguay, for example, where the UNICEF programmes were scheduled to end in 1999, UNICEF would prepare two-year programmes in order to harmonize the cycles with those of the other agencies. Having synchronized programme cycles would both create the necessary preconditions for the successful implementation of UNDAF and improve the complementarity of agencies' programmes. There were still some outstanding issues, however:

(a) The programme cycles of United Nations agencies would have to coincide with government planning periods, although with an increase in "rolling plans" and the wide range of planning cycles, in every case full synchronization might not be possible;

(b) In order to ensure continuing synchronization of cycles, there must be agreement on the length of future programming cycles. That would take into account both government planning cycles and the agencies' own internal, including Board-mandated, processes. The issue was on the work plan of the UNDG agencies in 1999;

(c) There were a number of countries where there were difficult circumstances, such as conflict, or where agencies had multi-country programmes covering different configurations of countries, or where the programme cycles were out of synchronization by more than one year. In these cases, the United Nations country teams had been asked to work with headquarters to prepare a plan of action to move towards harmonization.

121. Concerning common premises, she said that currently there were seven United Nations Houses that had been inaugurated by the Secretary-General, with a further 23 to be designated formally on an appropriate occasion in the coming months. In 14 additional countries, some combination of UNDG members shared premises. The UNDG subgroup

on common premises, chaired by UNICEF, would evaluate a further 20 locations each year for the next three years. The extent to which United Nations Houses would be established would depend on the evaluation and the availability of funding.

122. As for common services, she said, with support from key donors, the subgroup had begun to analyse common service practices and would build a database of best practices that country teams would be encouraged to adopt. However, much was happening at the country level. In Honduras, for example, which had a United Nations House, a cooperation agreement had been signed by the agencies that detailed the use and management of common services. In Guatemala, UNICEF estimated that the development of common and shared services had reduced budgeted administration and travel costs. Shared or common services were in place in all countries with a United Nations House, and in many others, including India, the Philippines and Zimbabwe, country teams were developing enhanced means of cooperation.

123. The pilot phase of the UNDAF exercise had been assessed in a number of ways, she said. The UNDG agencies had carried out an internal review which was complemented by a review by an external group of "eminent persons". Individual agencies, including UNICEF, had carried out their own analyses. The pilot phase had culminated in a system-wide consultation held in Princeton, New Jersey, in November 1998. In addition to the need for harmonization of programme cycles, the review highlighted the need to: (a) ensure full government participation and ownership; (b) carry out a thorough CCA and analysis as an essential precondition of UNDAF; and (c) revise the existing provisional guidelines and global support system, emphasizing regional support networks and drawing on the experience of the pilot phase.

124. On the basis of those reviews, UNDG members had agreed on proposals for the expansion of UNDAF. The UNDG subgroup on programme policies, chaired by UNICEF, was charged with the responsibility of drafting the new guidelines for the CCA, UNDAF and the global support system. The initial drafts were completed in December 1998 and circulated to all country teams in the pilot countries and to country teams that had completed the CCA exercise. All UNDG members, including the regional commissions, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Bank and the specialized agencies, had been asked for their comments. The subgroup aimed to complete the second draft in early February; once they were approved by the UNDG members, the guidelines would be issued to all country teams by early March. While the final roll-out plan could only be determined once it was clear which countries would have completed the CCA process and have harmonized programme cycles, preliminary indications were that some 50 countries should have embarked on the exercise by the end of 2000. All countries were encouraged to start the CCA process, however.

125. There were still a number of issues to be addressed, she said. Adding a CCA and an UNDAF to the individual programme development processes of each fund or programme simply was not feasible. Each agency would review the impact on its process, and for its part, UNICEF would have within the next few months proposals for discussion on how to adopt its programming process to this new reality. A second issue was how to apply and adapt UNDAF to countries in conflict and how it was linked to the Strategic Framework.

Links between development and humanitarian operations

126. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that one of the reasons that it was difficult to incorporate development initiatives in relief operations was their time-frame, which for an emergency operation typically was a few months. Follow-on phases had to be planned

almost simultaneously. During the first phase, it was almost impossible to identify a development possibility, invite potential partners to prepare proposals, engage personnel and place them in the field, build confidence with the local community and start the development work. WFP could assure development partners such as NGOs only very short-term funding and, as a result, it was not always easy to find qualified partners who were prepared to work on this basis.

127. Another difficulty was that staying too long in a pure relief phase could create distortions in economic structures, impede the rebuilding process and delay the emergence of locally-based food supply systems, he said. Thus, it was important to move as soon as possible to a recovery stage by reducing the general distribution of free food while still targeting the most vulnerable. As the overall costs of the operation declined, however, sometimes dramatically, the balance between the programme support costs and the programme deliverables changed. Viewed in those narrow terms, the operation appeared more costly and sometimes it was difficult to convince donors that operations were not becoming less efficient.

128. In 1998, the WFP Executive Board agreed that with few exceptions, a recovery strategy would be prepared within 18 months of the beginning of a relief operation. WFP, however, should begin introducing recovery approaches when the opportunity arose, even prior to the formulation of a recovery strategy. The Board also revised an existing category of programme activities to enable WFP to undertake development activities identified in the recovery strategy, using contributions from either or both the relief and development budget lines of donors. That programme category included a contingency mechanism to respond to possible setbacks, reversals and new emergencies or disasters. The adaptation was now established and had been used in Cambodia, Central America, the Great Lakes region of Africa, Somalia and Iraq.

129. The Executive Board had approved other policies, including continuing to work with partners through such inter-agency mechanisms as the Strategic Framework, the Consolidated Appeals Process and UNDAF; maximizing local inputs and participation; involving women in programme design, implementation and monitoring; strengthening local and national institutions and capacities; reinforcing pockets of stability during crises; engaging with civil society; and helping people to cope with crisis.

Discussion

130. A number of delegations spoke about the significance of the joint meeting itself within the context of United Nations reform, although it was suggested that in future, the joint meetings should focus on fewer topics.

131. Many speakers expressed continued support for UNDAF as a means of strengthening United Nations programmes at the country level through improved coordination and use of resources. CCAs were considered an important, crucial first step in elaborating UNDAF, which was also seen as a means of implementing the programmes of the international conferences. Delegations were encouraged by the progress made to date and by the commitment of the funds and programmes to the exercise, especially to harmonizing programme cycles and simplifying programming procedures. It was suggested that a broader range of partners, including the specialized agencies and the international financial institutions (IFIs), would increase the effectiveness of UNDAF. The need for ownership of the process by programme countries was stressed by many delegations. Speakers were encouraged by improvements in the resident coordinator system, especially the broadened pool of candidates and the new selection process.

132. A speaker said that there had been a decline in resources for development and that harmonization was a means of reducing duplication and increasing cost-effectiveness through such means as common premises. However, cost-cutting was not an end in itself. What was needed was the implementation of agreed projects in developing countries. Another speaker suggested that the executive heads of the funds and programmes issue a joint statement on resource flows to highlight the importance of the matter. It was also suggested that resident coordinators seek resources in programme countries through strategic alliances. The Executive Director, UNFPA, agreed that there was a need for a joint statement on resource mobilization but suggested that it specify what those resources could accomplish. The Administrator, UNDP, also supported the idea of a joint statement on resource flows.

133. On UNDAF, delegations asked about the possibility of joint programming and reporting; about what programming instruments could be eliminated and whether there were as yet ideas about how simplified programming procedures would work. It was also asked if the funds and programmes were contemplating reporting on the activities of Governments and of multilateral and bilateral donors. Questions were raised about the involvement of the World Bank in the UNDAF exercise. Some speakers raised questions about CCAs, with one asking if they could be made available to other development partners. The delegation of one of the UNDAF pilot countries said that the CCA would enhance the development partnership between the United Nations agencies, programme countries and the Bretton Woods institutions, in line with the need for national execution and ownership of the process.

134. The Administrator, UNDP, said that at the country level, it could be a long time before the individuality of funds and programmes was lost. However, the programming process did have to be simplified. As an example, UNDP was prepared to drop its advisory note in any country where UNDAF was in place. The UNDG subgroups on programme policies and operation were exploring ways of simplifying procedures and harmonization. At the country level, the United Nations family needed coordination that would include the funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, allowing them to merge their modest resources in joint, parallel strategies that supported the country's agenda while providing a "big table" for the Bretton Woods institutions and the IFIs. The resident coordinator system provided a platform for coordination at the country level. Collaborative programming had been successful in certain instances, as in Burundi, but in general, problems remained owing to the obligation of separate reporting arrangements.

135. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that there was a strong commitment to UNDAF, but it was important to maintain the identities of the funds and programmes, which were needed for fund-raising. There were many examples of joint assistance at the country level that did not involve all UNDG members, including the United Nations initiative on adolescent health in Botswana, which involved UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO; and the collaboration between UNDP, UNFPA and bilateral donors on the 1998 population census in Malawi. There was a question as to whether all agencies should participate in every initiative, as that could result in a "shopping list" of activities. First, the United Nations should assess with a Government what its priorities were and then invite the necessary agencies to participate.

136. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said there must be a balance between the distinctiveness of agencies and coordination. UNDAF was a planning framework that brought coherence and value to the United Nations interventions and interactions with countries, thus avoiding having too many priorities. Concerning reporting, she reported to the UNICEF Executive Board through a variety of reports, including MTRs reviews and

other country programme documentation. Also available to the UNDG agencies were the reports of the resident coordinators and the annual reports of each agency.

137. A delegation said that in many cases, countries' socio-economic progress was hindered by obligations to the IFIs. The effectiveness of the United Nations system in meeting the development challenge would benefit from their willingness to take into account the UNDAF analysis. He asked what was the reaction of the IFIs to CCAs and the resident coordinator system and what action could be taken to strengthen cooperation with the IFIs at the country level. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that once a good CCA had been completed, it provided an opportunity to involve ministries of finance in the work of the United Nations system. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that CCAs involved all development partners and, in some countries, for example Malawi and Ghana, the World Bank had signed the UNDAF. The Administrator, UNDP, said that discussions were under way between the UNDG members and the World Bank with regard to a new partnership approach.

138. A speaker said that more coordination was needed in emergencies and asked about the intentions of UNDG members to pursue that goal. Another asked the executive heads of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to address the transition from relief to development. The Administrator, UNDP, said that UNDAF could be used to broaden the work of the United Nations in the humanitarian fields. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that in 1998, both the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council and the triennial policy review had addressed joint work by United Nations partners. There were other forms of cooperation, including working groups, joint assessment missions, the establishment of memoranda of understanding and the inter-agency mechanisms. The Strategic Framework for Afghanistan was an example of coordination. At the country level, there was no reason why the humanitarian aspects of development should not be included in the CCA and UNDAF exercises.

139. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that of the 18 UNDAF pilot countries, none were complex emergencies. Issues that remained to be addressed included the question of the Strategic Framework or UNDAF in cases where there was no functioning Government. Relief and development were both part of the humanitarian response, but donors' definitions of related terms could improve. For example, health was considered a humanitarian response but not education, even though education was key to assisting children in conflict.

140. A speaker said that UNDP had been engaged in some countries in such activities as mine clearance and assistance to returnees, and asked that as manager of the resident coordinator system, UNDP respond more actively to such needs. The representative of Lebanon cited the importance of post-conflict peace-building, mentioning his own country's experience, and asked how such work could be coordinated and studied for lessons learned. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that she had visited Lebanon and been impressed by the convergence of relief, rehabilitation/construction and development activities taking place, all involving the private sector, NGOs and bilateral donors. The Administrator, UNDP, said that the International Peace Academy was studying lessons learned from peace-building that could be shared.

141. Concerning follow-up to the international conferences, a delegation said that the Economic and Social Council had held a session on integrated follow-up and asked if UNDG had taken up the issue. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that a joint, coordinated response would be helpful, as it would allow agencies to focus on the conferences that were appropriate to them. A speaker asked about experience to date in integrating follow-up to global conferences with national priorities. The Administrator, UNDP, said that one of the best analyses along those lines had been done by the United Nations country team in Pakistan, which had addressed how national goals coincided with the goals of the

conferences. He said that the Administrative Committee on Coordination agreement on poverty eradication was an example of how to build effectively on the outcomes of conferences.

142. Referring to a recent visit to Sierra Leone, a speaker asked the executive heads to address the follow-up by UNDG to the Secretary-General's report on Africa, specifically how the report's conclusions were being applied at the field level. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that Sierra Leone was an example of a country for which there had been high hopes for relief and development, but which had returned to crisis. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that UNDG had provided input to the Secretary-General's report and that the Administrative Committee had highlighted the importance of follow-up. UNDG had prepared a matrix of follow-up activity which had been sent to all country offices, and the process would be reviewed periodically. The CCAs, UNDAFs and specific reports also took into account the priority for Africa.

143. A speaker asked about the possibility of including a wider range of participants from civil society, especially NGOs, in the UNDAF process. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that in most UNDAF pilot countries, there had been some type of involvement of civil society.

144. A delegation said that the development of common indicators was an area in which the United Nations could contribute to the development process. These indicators were very useful in identifying the progress made by United Nations programmes. The speaker asked how other partners were participating in the development and use of common indicators. Another delegation asked to what extent national Governments were involved in the development of the indicators. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that the United Nations system had done much work in that area. There was agreement on the use of common indicators at the country level, with their applicability depending on a country's level of development. Programmes did not have to address every indicator. The indicators would be used as benchmarks to develop analytical systems required to monitor progress.

145. A delegation asked about country-level collaboration in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that in Botswana, a United Nations theme group was preparing a national priority programme to address HIV/AIDS control. There was also a programme for young people's health that involved bilateral donors.

146. In closing, the Executive Director, UNICEF, said that UNDAF, while still posing many challenges, had provided many benefits. It was still early in the process, which had begun in the middle of countries' programming processes. There were now more cohesive teams at the country level, and UNDAF brought to the programming process such fundamental issues as human rights and child rights, raising them as systemic, rather than single-agency issues. There was a better analysis of country situations, as for example in Viet Nam, where United Nations activities were focused on poorer areas, or Mozambique, where agencies were working with the Government in developing programmes for HIV/AIDS. The original challenge had been to clarify the role of the Government and to involve agencies not working in the country. There was still a need to reduce the programming process.

147. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that the common goal of the United Nations system should be to respond specifically to countries' needs at the country level.

148. The Administrator, UNDP, said that UNDAF should be the most effective framework at the country level. It would, however, take several years to roll out completely. Guidelines on the CCA and UNDAF would be presented to the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its spring 1999 session. UNDAF should not become a canopy for disparate

and individual programmes. He said he would like UNDAF to be a common programme document that replaced and consolidated all programming instruments. At present, he favoured bringing the Bretton Woods institutions into strategic arrangements at the country level rather that including them in the UNDAF process. In that regard, one factor was that the World Bank did not recognize the resident coordinator as its coordinator at the country level. Finally, he said that there had been a major overhaul of UNDP in recent years, as well in the United Nations itself, although the expected support from donors had not been forthcoming. The United Nations — a precious asset for Member States — needed to have more to be able to do more. He stressed the need for growth in assured and predictable resources for development. In the end, States were responsible for the development work of the United Nations.

B. Harmonization of budgets

149. On behalf of the three organizations, the UNICEF Comptroller presented the second report on "Harmonization of budgets: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF" (DP/1999/6; DP/FPA/1999/1; E/ICEF/AB/L.2) and expressed appreciation for the constructive comments provided by the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (DP/1999/7; DP/FPA/1999/3; E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.4).

150. The Comptroller reiterated the continuing commitment of the three organizations to work together to ensure that a harmonized approach to their support budgets, the format of which would continue to be modified to reflect not only identified improvements, but also new requirements as they emerged. She recalled the efforts leading to the harmonized proposal which concentrated on the development of comparable and transparent budget information, while preserving the unique nature and requirements of each organization. In other words, she said that harmonization meant more similarity but did not mean sameness.

151. For the benefit of delegations that had not participated in previous discussions of the subject, she briefly described the definitions of Programme, Programme Support and Management and Administration. She also described the two major changes proposed in the report. The executive summary had been reorganized to move the resource plan as the first table to be presented and to make the financial framework the first section under the executive summary. Also, a new table summarized key areas of savings and how the savings were redirected. All tables would show gross and net budget figures, but approval would still be made on the proposed gross budget.

152. Asked to clarify gross and net support budgets, the Comptroller said that the gross support budget reflected the total activities the organization would carry out, and the net support budget was the result of deducting the income to the budget. Each organization would explain this clearly in its respective budget document.

153. A delegation asked whether the information provided to the Advisory Committee concerning a detailed breakdown of staff costs and operating expenses would also be made available to members of the Executive Boards on request. The Comptroller said that each organization would provide any information requested by the Advisory Committee. Another speaker endorsed the inclusion of the item "government local office cost contribution" as income to the budget.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board

1999/1
Election of Executive Board representatives to the joint committees for the 1999–2000 biennium

The Executive Board

1. *Decides* to elect the following members and alternates to the World Health Organization/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund Coordinating Committee on Health for the 1999–2000 biennium:

(a) From the African group of States, Dr. Attiyat Mustapha (Sudan) as member;

(b) From the Asian group of States, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Al-Sindi as member and Mr. Walid Al-Ethary as alternate (Yemen);

(c) From the Eastern European group of States, Dr. Pavel Biskup (Czech Republic) as member;

(d) From the Latin American and Caribbean group of States, Mr. Samuel Aymer (Antigua and Barbuda) as member;

(e) From the Western European and Others group of States, Dr. Birte Holm Sorensen (Denmark) as member;

2. *Decides* to elect the following members and alternates to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education for the 1999–2000 biennium:

(a) From the African group of States, Mr. Souef Amine as member and Mr. Ahamada Hamadi as alternate (Comoros);

(b) From the Asian group of States, H.E. Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury as member and Mr. Muhammad Ali Sorcar as alternate (Bangladesh);

(c) From the Eastern European group of States, Mrs. Fatma Abdullazadeh (Azerbaijan) as member;

(d) From the Latin American and Caribbean group of States, Mrs. Celsa Bareiro (Paraguay) as member;

(e) From the Western European and Others group of States, Ms. Myra Harrison as member and Mr. Steve Packer as alternate (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

3. *Agrees* that the candidates to be proposed by the regional groups that have not yet submitted nominations to the joint committees will be considered elected upon receipt by the secretariat of a letter from the Chairman of the respective regional group confirming the nominations.

First regular session
19 January 1999

1999/2
Private Sector Division work plan and proposed budget for 1999

A. Private Sector Division budgeted expenditures for the 1999 season

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* for the fiscal year 1 January to 31 December 1999 budgeted expenditures of $88.8 million as detailed below and summarized in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5:

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Commissions — field offices	2.5
Cost of goods delivered	35.4
Marketing expenditures	21.3
Support Services	16.6
Market Development Programme (MDP)	4.0
Fund-raising Development Programme (FDP)	8.5
Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme	0.5
Total expenditures, consolidated[a]	88.8

[a] For details, see E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5, table 2.

2. *Authorizes* the Executive Director:

(a) To incur expenditures as summarized in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5 and to increase the expenditures up to the level indicated in column III of the same table should the apparent proceeds from product sales and/or private sector fund-raising increase to the levels indicated in column III, and accordingly, to reduce expenditures below the level indicated in column II to the extent necessary, should the net proceeds decrease;

(b) To redeploy resources between the various budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above) up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 1999 approved work plan.

B. Budgeted income for the 1999 season

The Executive Board

Notes that for the period 1 January to 31 December 1999, Private Sector Division (PSD) net proceeds are budgeted at $284.3 million (general resources) as shown in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5.

C. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* the changes in posts with a net decrease of four posts as indicated in annexes I and III to document E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5;

2. *Renews* MDP with $4.0 million established for 1999;

3. *Renews* FDP with $8.5 million established for 1999;

4. *Renews* the Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme, which includes nine countries, with a budget of $0.5 million established for 1999;

5. *Authorizes* the Executive Director to incur expenditures in the 1999 fiscal period related to the cost of goods delivered (production/purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 2000 fiscal year up to $37.1 million as indicated in the PSD medium-term plan (see table 6 of document E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.5).

D. Medium-term plan

The Executive Board

Approves the PSD medium-term plan.

First regular session
20 January 1999

1999/3
Report on progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 1998–1999

The Executive Board

Takes note of the "Report on progress in implementing the biennial support budget for 1998–1999" (E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.1).

First regular session
21 January 1999

1999/4
Financial matters

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following reports:

(a) "UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1997 and report of the Board of Auditors" (A/53/5/Add.2);

(b) "Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgeting Questions" (E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.9).

First regular session
21 January 1999

1999/5
1999 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

The Executive Board

1. *Decides* to present the 1999 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award to the Tanzanian non-governmental organization *kuleana*;

2. *Approves* an allocation of $25,000 from general resources for that purpose.

First regular session
21 January 1999

1999/6
Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

The Executive Board

1. *Notes* that in its discussion of the reports of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 (E/ICEF/1996/10 (Part I), E/ICEF/1997/10 (Part I), E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I) and E/ICEF/1999/4 (Part I) respectively), the Executive Board called for more analytical and problem-oriented reporting, including in decision 1998/1 (E/ICEF/1998/6/Rev.1), for future reports to include and identify issues which would require particular consideration of the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council;

2. *Welcomes* the progress towards this goal, but notes that more is needed;

3. *Recalls* Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/27 of 28 July 1998, which, *inter alia*, requests the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to ensure that the heads of these funds and programmes include in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to ensure that future reports to the Economic and Social Council advance the Executive Board's wish for greater analytical effort, selected focus on key issues, problem-oriented reporting and discussions of lessons learned;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to transmit document E/ICEF/1999/4 (Part I) to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments made by delegations at the present session;

6. *Welcomes* the statement of the Executive Director that, as called for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/27, she will join in providing to the Council, in consultation with other members of the United Nations Development Group, a concise, consolidated list of issues that are central to the improved coordination of related operational activities.

First regular session
22 January 1999

1999/7
Revised elements for inclusion in part II of the Executive Director's annual report

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* recent proposals by the Executive Director regarding the contents of this year's annual report;

2. *Decides* that, starting from 2000:

(a) Information in part II of the Executive Director's report should be presented to the Executive Board in a way that facilitates monitoring of progress in achieving the objectives in programmes and activities within the framework of organizational priorities in the medium-term plan (MTP);

(b) The Executive Director's annual report (part II) should be developed as an analytical report of annual global progress in the priority areas of the MTP in a manner that links planning, programming, budgeting and outcomes, and should include a review of the following:

(i) Objectives and results achieved, aggregated qualitatively and/or quantitatively, in areas of action set out in the organizational priorities of the MTP, in particular those which respond to national priorities reflected in UNICEF country programmes of cooperation;

(ii) An estimate of financial resources applied to these areas of action;

(iii) Main obstacles encountered;

(iv) Main lessons learned and implications for the future work of UNICEF;

(v) Other issues of special interest to the Executive Board (such as how UNICEF collaboration with other United Nations agencies, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, affects the success of specific country programmes).

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1999/8
Resource mobilization strategy

The Executive Board

1. *Decides* to adopt this resource mobilization strategy in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/59 of 24 July 1997;

2. *Welcomes* the resource mobilization strategy of UNICEF in support of its role as the lead United Nations agency for children, especially with regard to supporting national efforts to reach the goals of the World Summit for Children and to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

3. *Welcomes* the UNICEF medium-term plan (MTP) as a core element in the resource mobilization strategy and as a flexible, evolving, multi-year strategic framework

that integrates a vision for children for the next century, and lays down the organizational priorities and major areas of action of UNICEF and the financial framework;

4. *Notes*, in this context, that the financial part of the MTP for 1998–2001 forecasts an annual growth in income of 3 to 4 per cent to be used for planned organizational expenditures, and *further notes* that the plan's estimated funding target of an annual growth in income of 7 per cent is established for the purpose of resource mobilization and to achieve UNICEF programme priorities;

5. *Endorses* the funding target of an annual growth in income of 7 per cent, to reach $1.5 billion by 2005, as a challenge for the mobilization of general resources and supplementary funds from Governments and from the private sector and all other donors;

6. *Expresses* appreciation to the National Committees for UNICEF for their invaluable contribution to UNICEF, which accounts for about one third of the organization's total income, and *requests* the secretariat, especially through the Regional Office for Europe, the Private Sector Division and the Division of Communication, to continue to support the Committees' efforts;

7. *Decides* that UNICEF shall adopt and develop a multi-year funding framework (see annex) that conceptually integrates UNICEF organizational priorities and major areas of action, resources, budget and outcomes:

(a) With the objectives of:

(i) Increasing general resources, making general resources more assured and predictable and improving burden-sharing among donors, while maintaining the voluntary nature of contributions to UNICEF;

(ii) Strengthening the planning of activities with the formulation of overall objectives for areas of action in the MTP, with an estimate of UNICEF financial resources applied to these areas and with annual reporting on the outcome of these areas, while taking into account the specificity of UNICEF country programmes;

(b) And further taking into account the following principles:

(i) The multi-year funding framework shall maintain the priorities and respect the mandate of UNICEF;

(ii) The framework shall not introduce any conditionality or result in distortions of priorities or changes in the current system of resource allocation;

8. *Decides*, to this end, to adopt the following measures:

(a) At the first regular session each year Governments which are able to do so will:

(i) Announce their voluntary contributions to UNICEF general resources, as follows: a firm funding commitment for the current year; for those in a position to do so, a firm contribution or indication of the contribution for the following year, and a firm or tentative contribution for the third year;

(ii) Announce their payment schedules for the current year. Early payments should be encouraged;

(b) Governments which are not able to take the action described in subparagraphs (a)(i) and (ii) above at the first regular session will communicate their

contribution to the Executive Board and the secretariat once their budgetary processes are complete, if possible no later than April;

(c) In the context of the MTP, the secretariat, as appropriate, will hold consultations with individual Governments on the possibility of increased contributions to general resources;

(d) To strengthen the multi-year funding framework, UNICEF will develop part II of the annual report of the Executive Director in accordance with decision 1999/7;

(e) As an element of part II of the annual report, the secretariat will prepare an analysis of the payments received against payment schedules, to be included in an analysis of the availability of resources, their predictability, as well as obstacles, constraints and future potential introduced by the multi-year funding framework. This analysis will be discussed by the Executive Board at its annual session;

9. *Further decides* that UNICEF shall adopt the following measures concerning contributions to supplementary funds:

(a) For regular supplementary funds:

(i) In its consultations with donor Governments, the secretariat will explore thematic, multi-country approaches and will report annually on the results of these efforts as well as on traditional contributions to supplementary funds;

(ii) The secretariat will develop a new reporting system with donor Governments and National Committees and propose it to the Executive Board;

(b) For emergency contributions:

(i) Where possible, Governments will provide an early indication and commitment of planned contributions for emergency programmes for the year, upon receipt of consolidated appeals from the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance;

(ii) Wherever possible, UNICEF and donor Governments will establish framework agreements, to be discussed in the course of consultations;

(iii) Governments will consider providing maximum flexibility in using funds for the most urgent needs as they emerge in rapidly shifting emergency situations, giving UNICEF greater discretion in moving funds between sectors or within regions. These measures could include, for example, leaving 20 per cent of a contribution as non-earmarked;

(iv) The secretariat will explore what level of flexibility will be possible for each government donor and report on the results of these discussions;

(v) A revised reporting system will be developed and proposed to the Board, to provide an overall general report for each specific appeal, accompanied by a summary of contributions from various sources and of total expenditures, broken down by sector;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to propose at the first regular session in 2000 a plan on the timing of the presentation to the Executive Board of the various elements of the multi-year funding framework, with a view to enhancing their interlinkages;

11. *Further requests* the Executive Director to make oral reports to the Board at its remaining sessions in 1999 about progress in the preparation of the proposals mentioned in paragraph 10 above;

12. *Finally requests* the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board each year, in part II of her annual report to the Board, on the progress made to date in the implementation of the present decision.

Annex

The UNICEF multi-year funding framework is an approach to resource mobilization composed of the following elements:

(a) The four-year MTP which integrates UNICEF organizational priorities, resources and budget;

(b) The biennial support budget;

(c) An analytical annual report by the Executive Director (part II) that facilitates monitoring of progress in achieving the objectives identified for the areas of activities set out in the organizational priorities of the MTP;

(d) The announcement by Governments of their voluntary contributions for a particular current year, together with firm or indicative contributions for future years, as well as a discussion by the UNICEF Executive Board of an analysis prepared by the secretariat about the availability of resources;

(e) The holding of consultations by the secretariat with individual Governments on their contributions to general resources.

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